

## Interview H0235: Surkhang Wangchen Gelek [tib. zur khang dbang chen dge legs], (USA, 1967) : Part No. 3 of 7

*The interviewee was one of the most important Tibetan government officials in modern Tibetan history. He served as a Kashag Minister (Kalön) from 1943-1959. He discusses Tibetan history and the political shifts as power moved between the Dalai Lama and the regents. He also discusses the appointment of Reting as Regent, Lungshar's rise to power and how his plans to reform the political system failed.*

Q

Continuation of the history, 22 September.

A

The kings [tib. rgyal po] of Tibet came into existence when the 5th Dalai Lama first got the power in Tibet. He appointed people who he trusted (tib. lö khewa [blos 'khel ba]) as the king. The first one was Lobsang Chömpel [tib. blo bzang chos 'phel], then Lobsang Jinpa [tib. blo bzang sbyin pa], then Lobsang Thuthob [tib. blo bzang mthu stobs], then Trinley Gyatso [tib. 'phrin las rgya mtsho] and then finally Sangye Gyatso [tib. sangs rgyas rgya mtsho]. There were 5 regents who came mostly from among the monks of the [Namgye Tratsang](#). They were appointed by the Dalai Lama himself and were not like Kudrak (government officials).

After the 5th Dalai Lama's time was finished, Lhabsang Khan [tib. lha bzang khan], the grandson of Gushri Khan, became the king of Tibet and held the power for 11 years. After that, the war of the Dzungars occurred. They took the power and a Dzungar military officer (tib. magpön [dmag dpon]) called Tsering Thöndrub [tib. tshe ring don grub] became the king of Tibet for 3 years. But at that time, he stayed back stage and gave the orders through an old Tibetan called Tagtse Desi Lhagyel Rabten [tib. stag rtse sde srid lha rgyal rab brtan].

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When the army of the Chinese Emperor came, the Dzungars fled and Tagtse Desi was left there, so the Chinese Emperor beheaded him. After he was killed, the Chinese Emperor thought about what would be good regarding the position of king of Tibet, and he appointed Khangchenne [tib. khang chen nas] from among the Kudrak (government officials) as the king of Tibet. He was a Kudrak from [Tsang](#) [tib. gtsang]. He was the king of Tibet for 7 years, but the [Shape](#) fought and killed Khangchenne. Then, when there was no king of Tibet, the Kashag took over the power for 2-3 years.

During this time, the war between Ü [tib. dbus] and [Tsang](#) took place and Pholhane [tib. pho lha nas] won the war. Then the army of the Chinese Emperor came and beheaded 17 people including the [three] [Kalön](#) who had killed Khangchenne. Pholhane was given the position king of Tibet and he held this for 20 years. When he died, since the Chinese Emperor liked Pholhane very much, his son was appointed as the king of Tibet right away. He served as the king for 6-7 years, but he didn't listen to the orders from the Chinese Emperor and did all sorts of reckless things (tib. gangchung mangchung [gang byung mang byung]). Therefore, according to the order of the Chinese Emperor, he was killed. After that, the Chinese Emperor said that we should not appoint a king of Tibet and the Dalai Lama should take the power. And there should be 4 [Shape](#) who were made more powerful. Before that, the [Shape](#) didn't have much power.

Q

In the past, only the king had the power and the Dalai Lama and the Shapes didn't have power, right?

A

Yes. Then [using English], the political power came into the hands of the Dalai Lama. The 4 Kalöns worked under him. The Chinese Emperor trusted this arrangement. The 7th Dalai Lama died when he was 50 years old. When there was no Dalai Lama, we needed a replacement [tib. tshab]. At that time, there were no Huthogthu, but there was Demo [tib. de mo] Trüku Jampe Delek Gyatso [tib. 'jam dpal bde legs rgya mtsho], He was a nice lama who had served the Dalai Lama and stayed near him and the Dalai Lama was very fond of him so everyone told the Chinese Amban that this lama is nice and humble so how about appointing him as the regent? The Amban reported this to the Chinese Emperor and the Chinese Emperor said that this is okay. Then that lama was given the title Huthogthu. This was the first Huthogthu.

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Q

Did the Chinese Emperor give him that title?

A

Yes. And he became the first regent. After his death, his reincarnation was also given the title Huthogthu and it became a big household. After that the 8th Dalai Lama [answer not finished]

Q

Who decided that the Dalai Lama should take the power at the age 18?

A

The Chinese Emperor decided it.

Q

Did the Chinese Emperor decide it at that time?

A

It was decided after that, during the time of the 2nd-3rd Dalai Lama.

Q

Who made the rule for the Kudrak to serve the government?

A

Do you mean the lay officials serving the government?

Q

Yes. Who started the rule to have the estates owned by the aristocrats be the basis from which they derive their subsistence (tib. shabten [phashi](#) [zhabs rten pha gzhis]) as well as the basis for their obligation to provide an official to the government?

A

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At the time of the Phamodrupa [tib. phag mo gru pa] and Sakya [tib. sa skya], there were many great families (tib. mitsang chempo [mi tshang chen po]). This first happened during the time of the Dharma Kings (tib. chögyel [chos rgyal] when there were great families. Even now we have the great family called Doring [tib. rdo ring] in the Tibetan government (tib. [dewashung](#) [sde ba gzhung]). They are the descendants of the Minister Gar [tib. [lönbo](#) gar [blon po mgar]] who was the one who made war against China.

Q

Most of these Kudrak didn't have such accomplishments, right?

A

Most of them got that title when someone [using English] famous came from their family. For example, [someone] like Sir Hillary and Tenzin Sherpa who climbed the Mount Everest became Kudrak. It was similar to that.

Q

In those days, there was no Dewashung (government) who owned the shabten [phashi](#) estates, right?

A

There was no government, but there was the Phagmodrupa's government before the 5th Dalai Lama and there were big Kudrak like Janglo [tib. lcang lo] in Gyantse. Later they were called kings [tib. rgyal po] like Jaga Tripön [sp? khri dpon] and Gyantse Dharma King and Desi Tagtse. These were all the ministers (tib. [lönchen](#) [blon chen]) of Phagmodrupa and they owned large areas of land. There was also one called Depa Rinpungpa [tib. sde pa rin spungs pa].

Q

Those didn't have the names, right?

A

Some had names like Janglo. When the Phagmodrupa lost power, these great families surrendered to the new [ruler] and he also gave them titles and since they knew some writing they became the lords (tib. bömpo [dpon po]).

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Q

There were only about 10-15 of these great families among the 200 Kudrak families, right?

A

Yes.

Q

The others became Kudrak afterwards, right?

A

Yes. Later, many of these arose. For example, when Pholhane made war, he had many servants who didn't have [using English] last names, for example, one of them from [Tsang](#) was called Rabten [tib. rab brtan]. When Pholhane became the king, he [Rabten] became the lay official called Thöraba [tib. dol rab pa] because he was born in the place called Thöl. Many servants who had [using English] loyalty to Pholhane became Kudrak in the Dewashung. Some of them had the priest-patron relations (tib. chöyon [dre](#) [chos yon 'brel]) with the 5th Dalai Lama when they made war against the [Tsangpa](#) [tib. gtsang pa] King. They were a kind of the military commanders (magpön) who helped the Mongolians who sided with the 5th Dalai Lama. Then they became Kudrak.

If the Dalai Lama told the Mongolians to send soldiers to [Tsang](#) and at that time, for example, if I take many people from the Drag [tib. brag] Estate and help the Mongols, after that, when the [Tsangpa](#) were destroyed, the Mongols might give an estate to our servant who helped them and he would become a lay official.

Q

Was that the time when they became government officials?

A

Yes.

Q

Since the 7th Dalai Lama, were all the regents lamas?

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A

Only one, [Shatra](#) [tib. bshad sgra], was not a lama. All the others were lamas. Among the lamas, the ones who were Huthogthu served as the regent twice and three times. Otherwise, the [Ganden Tripa](#) would become the regent. The first one was Demo and next was Kündeling Tatshag [tib. rta tshags]. He was not the [Ganden Tripa](#). He became the regent twice. Tsomönling [tib. tshe smon gling] was the [Ganden Tripa](#) and he became regent twice. And Detrug [tib. sde drug] was a [Ganden Tripa](#) and became regent once. There was an old [Ganden Tripa](#) who became regent and then his household became big and he became a Huthogthu. That was Tengyeling [tib. bstan rgyas gling]. He served as regent three times. Reting was the regent twice.

Q

They would choose the regent from among the Huthogthu, right?

A

Yes. At that time, Tsomönling was young. I wrote on these things and said that the Chinese Emperor implemented a bad policy in Tibet. If they sent soldiers, they would have had to send many soldiers to suppress (tib. nen [mnan]) Tibet, so they gave the high lamas the title Huthogthu and gave all the Kudraks titles like Gung, Dzasa and Theiji and gave them many estates and made all the [labrang](#) big and made them all become the subjects [tib. mi] of the Chinese Emperor. And they made them suppress many Tibetan people, so the Chinese Emperor didn't have to watch them. He made the Tibetans suppress Tibetans in Tibet. Gung, Dzasa and Theiji were not Tibetan words; it was their language. All the Huthogthu had different names -- Kündeling was called Tongxian and Tengyeling was called Jirin xiansheng, Tsomönling was called Samada Pagshi and Reting was called Elji. These were Mongolian [using English] titles. The reason why [Shatra](#) got the [regent position] was because he was [using English] excellent and got rid [tib. med pa bzo] of the [former Regent] Reting. [Lungshar](#) hoped a day like this would come again when Reting became the regent on the 1st of the 1st lunar month [answer not finished]

Q

Before that date, it was already confirmed, right?

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A

Though Reting himself didn't know that, Dewashung did the astrological calculations and said that the 1st of the 1st lunar month is a good date and then Reting said, [using English] "yes, yes".

Q

How old was Reting then?

A

He was born in the Water-Mouse [tib. [chu](#) byi] Year. He was the same age as Yuthok Lhajam [tib. g.yu thog lha lcam]. He was 23 years old according to lunar years. At that time, Reting didn't have any idea of using the power and suppressing [people]. He was happy like a child enjoying New Year, because he had a high salary and people were giving him many gifts and he didn't have any thoughts of suppressing people. [Lungshar](#) thought the regent is a like a new child, so we can use the power and write the plans and go to the regent and he will use the red ink and put the dot on it and we can do all the things we want.

Q

At that time, [Lungshar](#) didn't have a big name, right?

A

Yes. But he was trying to exercise power through the monks in Sera and Drepung by making friends with them.

Q

He was trying to do something to the regent through Sendre, right?

A

When the regent was not doing good, [Lungshar](#) thought that he would tell [Sendregasum](#) to rise up and when they said there is something wrong, we should hold the Tsondu assembly and say that regent is not right and is doing reckless things. [Lungshar](#) could go through the motions of saying something like, "Oh, I see!" He was planning to use his

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power like this. At that time, the majority of the Kudrak were scared of [Lungshar](#) and they thought it will be good to flatter and make friends with him otherwise he will treat people badly.

Q

Why did [Sendregasum](#) do whatever [Lungshar](#) told them to do?

A

There were several bad people in [Sendregasum](#) who thought that they could become like the representatives of the monks during the time of the [Shatra](#) Regent who became very powerful. One, Panden Thöndrub [tib. dpal ldan don grub], even became the [Jigyab khempo](#). He acted just like Chamön [tib. byams smon] and those people at that time. During that period, an ordinary monk under [Shatra](#) who came from Ganden and didn't know writing and was very sassy (tib. kha gyagpa [kha rgyags pa]) got promoted and became [Jigyab khempo](#) when [Shatra](#) got more power. Two monks who didn't have any power in the past came to have power. So when these people said something, they thought that the majority of monks are happy thinking that in the past the Sendre monks didn't have power in Dewashung, but now it is good for the monks to have power. They didn't know any other things.

Q

Didn't [Lungshar](#) think that although the monks are listening to me now, if the abbots said something next month, they might listen to the abbots and not listen to me?

A

By that time, all the people were already very afraid of [Lungshar](#). I think in the 12th month, just before the regent was appointed, all people only had thoughts of [using English] being defensive and didn't have thoughts of fighting battles against others. At this time, [Lungshar](#) could do whatever he wanted, but he didn't. He was a little bit not brave enough (tib. tetse logo chung trag [tog tsam blo khog chung drag] and he felt happy with the current situation because all people were scared of him and he thought this was enough for me.

Then when Reting was appointed as the regent, he liked [Lungshar](#) very much because he was powerful and the regent talked with [Lungshar](#). Some people said that probably



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Lungshar will be appointed as a new shape. In the first month, when the regent was appointed, since the regent was a lama, the Kashag was kind of relaxed because he [the regent] didn't have a [using English] party behind him. In the past, their [using English] boss the Silön didn't have any power and now a powerful [using English] boss came.  
[answer not finished]

Q

When there is no Dalai Lama, the Regent had the power and the Silön doesn't have the power, right?

A

In the beginning, when the Silön was appointed, he had the power. Then it was decided that the Regent and the Silön are the same. It was because according to the religion, the regent can give the hand blessing (tib. chawang [phyag dbang]) but the Silön will not do that. Also people would prostrate before the regent because he is a lama, but they would not do that to the Silön. So they said that we need a person [as a regent] who can give hand blessings and to whom people will prostrate.

Q

Did the Tsondu say that?

A

The monks in the Tsondu said that, and they said they need a regent, but when they wrote the note [tib. yi ge], the regent was yet to be appointed and the Silön still had the power so people were a little bit scared of him. Therefore, they wrote in the plan that the Silön and the Regent shall work jointly. It was decided like this by the Tsondu.

Q

What do you call that note?

A

We call it tsigtho [tib. tshig tho]). So in that tsigtho, it was written that the Silön and the Regent have equal power. So when people submitted petitions, on the top [the heading], they would write "to the supreme high lotus foot of the great Reting Huthogthu, the nucleus

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of the welfare of Buddhism and the sentient beings in Tibet and the great inner minister [tib. gangs ljongs bstan 'gro'i phan bde'i srog shing rwa sbreng hu thog thu chen po mchog dang/ srid 'dzin mi dbang bka'i nang blon chen po] and a little below that they would write: "to the joint committee of the great Sawangs] [tib. sa dbang mi rje lhan rgyas mchog gi zhabs pad mngon mtho'i drung du].

When the Dalai Lama was there, people would write, "to the supreme high lotus foot of the Dalai Lama, the all knowing supreme [lord](#) of cyclic existence and the state of peace including the god's realm and the savior of the gods and humans [tib. lhar bcas srid zhi'i gtsug rgyan gong sa lha mi'i rnam 'dren skyabs mgon rgyal dbang thams cad mkhyen cing gzigs pa chen po mchog dang]. And a little below that, they wrote, "To the great inner ministers [tib. srid 'dzin mi dbang bka'i nang blon chen po], and one line below that they wrote: "To the joint committee of the great Sawangs] [tib. sa dbang mi rje lhan rgyas mchog gi zhabs pad mngon mtho'i drung du].

So when the Nendrön would pass down the order (tib. kagyur [bka' sgyur]) for appointing a Kudrak to a new position like a Tsipön, he said, "According to the joint order from the great savior the Regent Reting Huthogthu and the great inner minister [tib. skyabs mgon srid skyong rwa sbreng hu thog thu chen po mchog dang/ srid 'dzin mi dbang bka'i nang blon chen po lhan rgyas kyi bka' phebs sgo la].

In the 1st month, they both held office in the Potala (tib. tse [rtse]). The Regent had the house in [Tse](#) and stayed there all the time and the Silön was coming to the [using English] office during daytime riding his horse and staying home at night because he had his wife.

Q

At that time, didn't [Lungshar](#) object (tib. gagcha [dgag cha]) to the decision of giving equal power to the Regent and the Silön?

A

No, he didn't. And he would not do that because the Silön was just a name and was like a child and didn't do anything like using power. He was eating with [Künphel](#) la and if some said, "Take him to prison" the Silön would say [using English] "okay." And probably he was also treating [Lungshar](#) well telling him, "You are a nice person" So [Lungshar](#) was saying, "leave the child, poor thing! He is a good person" [tib. pu gu 'di dbyug zhog/ snying rje/ mi 'di yag po red].

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Q

And then?

A

In the 1st and 2nd month, Reting was happy to be the Regent and didn't have thoughts to treat anybody badly. And the Silön and the Regent were very friendly because the Regent didn't know how to write and the Silön was very good in writing because the Dalai Lama made him Silön in early times so he was writing all the things even though the Regent and the Silön were holding the office jointly. At that time, they had the same power and all the people were not saying that the Regent is using his power and the Silön didn't have the power. For example, when they appointed some positions like when Kabshöpa [tib. ka shos pa] received the Tshipön position, the The Lhasa people [sang](#) the street song with the words, "A golden arrow was shot from the roof top of Kabshöpa and Lady Yabshi's [Yabshi is a title for families of a Dalai Lama and the Silön was from Langdön, a [Yabshi](#) family] right hip was broken." [tib. ka shod thog kha'i sgang nas/ gser gyi mda' cig rgyag dus/ [yab](#) gzhis lha lcam sku zhabs/ dpyi 'go g.yas pa bcag song]. So people outside were seeing that the Silön was more powerful than the Regent. But this was not true because the Regent had wanted to appoint Kabshöpa. He was not appointed by the Silön alone.

At that time the majority of the Tibetan Kudrak were worried about the death of the Dalai Lama and were thinking that there might not be tranquility in Tibet, but nobody had the thought of harming each other. As for [Lungshar](#), among the Tibetans he was the one who went to London and knew a little bit about the foreign affairs and the political systems in the world. Therefore, [Lungshar](#) was not satisfied and used people's power to make the [using English] party and he knew that people's power is strong and one person's power is not strong.

So he made many friends most of whom were the powerful monks and eloquent ones in Sendre. And from among the Kudrak, he chose talkative (tib. kha thönpo [kha thon po]) ones and who were a little bit poor and faced some hardships. He made them have hope in the future. Later, people said [Lungshar](#) was a communist, but he was not a communist. However, he made the [using English] party powerful the way the Westerners did. In the past, he stayed in Tibet for about 20 years being very powerful, so he had many enemies and was also afraid that one day they might harm him. So in order to stop them and to make his power stable, he did lot of work. He was the most worried and the most

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miserable person [tib. sems khral dang sdug bsngal che chos]. At that time, if [Lungshar](#) had remained friendly with the Reting, he would get the [Kalön](#) position, but if he became a [Kalön](#), there was no hope to protect himself from dangers because in the past he had made many enemies in the country.

Mainly, he didn't get along well with [Tashilhunpo](#) and he also didn't get along with the Kudrak in Tibet because at the time when the 13th Dalai Lama was alive, he imposed a new tax called Babshi [tib. 'bab zhib] on the Kudraks who had big estates. This was imposed on the big households who needed to pay several thousands of [khe](#) of grain in a year. This was like the [using English] income tax in these places. So all the people were saying that [Lungshar](#) didn't do good work and made us have a hard time. However, actually, Dewashung (the government) got the income and it was not that the Kudrak were unable to pay it because he imposed taxes on their extra estates. It was an order from the Dalai Lama and it was to cover the expenses of the newly established soldiers. So at that time, what [Lungshar](#) did had harmed individual persons, but it was very helpful for the government.

For example, it is said that [Lungshar](#) considered that [Tashilhunpo](#) was his enemy (tib. drache [dgra byed]) and he made [Tashilhunpo](#) pay one-fourth of the government's military salary. Later, the Panchen Lama fled because of this, saying that he can't pay it. He [Lungshar] had made [Tashilhunpo](#) his enemy. Therefore, [Lungshar](#) felt very miserable and thought of making the [using English] party strong to guard himself. He thought of making a new stable government in which he himself would become a big leader of the [using English] party who would be elected by the people. This was his hope, so he gathered many poor Kudrak who owed lots of loans, but who were knowledgeable and he told them, "The way we manage the government is not okay at all so we have to do new work." [Lungshar](#) started his work from the 2nd lunar month. People outside knew a little bit, but they didn't dare to say that and also how could the Kashag dare to say that because [Sendregasum](#) was in there. This was just after they punished and sent [Künphel](#) La to Kongpo.

Q

When [Lungshar](#) started it in the 2nd month, approximately how many people were there in his party?

A

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There were over 100 people in their party. Among them, there was the Commander-in-Chief [Tempa Jayang](#) [tib. bstan pa 'jam dbyangs]. He was the most important person. After [Lungshar](#) was no more, [Tempa Jayang](#) became the [Kalön](#) lama with me [Surkhang] for one year and then he died. He was a very famous person. During Lungshar's time he was the Commander-in-Chief and he had a good and close relation with Reting Labrang. He also felt a little enmity towards [Künphel](#) La and didn't get along well with him. During [Künphel](#) la's time, he was demoted from a high position and his wealth was confiscated. But after [Künphel](#) La died and Reting became the regent, he was promoted to the post of Commander-in-Chief. And there were also some big Kudraks. There were over 100 Kudraks in his party.

For example, he also made friend with me and told me to come to vote and join them. At that time, Janglocen [gung](#), who was related to me, told me, "Ola, [way to call a younger brother or a younger relative] if you stay like this, you can't succeed at all. Now a new Tibet is developing, so all of us have to go/join" [tib. o lags/ da 'dug se bzugs na khungs rtsa nas 'khyol gyi ma red/ deng [sang](#) bod gsar pa yar rgyas 'di 'dra 'gro dus nga rang [tsho](#) tshang ma 'gro dgos red]. He told me many times, but I didn't do that because it was dangerous. In the early times, there were many histories of having [using English] parties in Tibet who put seals on an agreement and took an oath, but one day when several people were arrested, everyone was afraid and said, "I didn't do that, he did that." Therefore, we were thinking that this is not certain [tib. tan tan] because in our history many people didn't have knowledge and didn't know what is good. One day, when some powerful individual touched it, he could do whatever he wanted. So we didn't join it, and although most of the Kudraks were in it, there were not many of the big households and [Lungshar](#) also knew that. At that time, [Lungshar](#) could win over many Kudrak.

Q

What was Lungshar's plan?

A

Lungshar's plan was to make a new government. Although they didn't say that they were going to expel the top leaders [tib. 'go'i dpon po] right away, they were going to make them powerless and then after a while people would vote.

Q

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Was it all the people or what?

A

He said, "People now didn't have knowledge and didn't know how to write. So we should teach them writing like opening their eyes and in the future when they knew writing and become smart, all should vote and make a new system and demolish the big patrilineal estates [tib. pha gzhis] and the big families and make the Kudraks get promoted through education. Anyway, it was to make a new system and make his own situation stable. But he didn't have good thoughts of making a new Tibet. All people knew that because when he was powerful he didn't do anything to develop (tib. yargye [yar rgyas]) Tibet. When he alone got the power backed by the Dalai Lama, he didn't develop Tibet. And now this was a development in a desperate situation [tib. 'u thug pa] because it was to guard himself and he didn't have any other methods to do this.

Q

Before the Tibetan people got educated, what was his plan for the time being?

A

He was thinking that when people are uneducated, he would say verbally "in the future it is the people [tib. rjes ma mi dmangs red da] and it is [using English] a "republic," but in fact it was for his friends [answer not finished]

Q

What name did he use?

A

He was saying it is a new government.

Q

Didn't he say democracy (tib. [mangtso](#) [dmangs gtso])?

A

No, he didn't. I will tell you later, right? He was not saying democracy. He was saying the system of the present government is old and it will make mistakes [tib. nor gyi red] and the

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people need the power. All of these seems good when he said that it should be [a system] wherein the people have the power. He was making this and for making that, and he held meetings and quite a lot was already done. In the beginning, they were holding meetings at night on the sly [tib. kha khar] and the ones who were in the party, were signing their names.

Q

Did they have a name for their [using English] party?

A

No, they didn't name the [using English] party.

Q

Party is an English term. What did they call it in Tibetan?

A

They said it was something [tsogpa](#) [tib. tshogs pa]. It was not called freedom party (tib. rangwang [tsogpa](#) [rang dbang tshogs pa]). I will think about it. It was probably called the reform party [tib. legjo [tsogpa](#) [legs bcos tshogs pa]]. After some time, they were meeting during the daytime.

Q

They started meeting in the 2nd month, right?

A

At that time, they were meeting covertly. The most powerful one in the Kashag was [Trimön](#) [tib. khri smon] because he was an old [Shape](#) from the 13th Dalai Lama's time. And the others had become [Shape](#) since just a few years.

Q

Who were the other [Shape](#)?

A

One was called Chöthar la [tib. chos dar lags]. He had been a [Shape](#) for only 2 years.

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Q

Was he a [tsidrung](#) (monk official)?

A

He was the [Kalön](#) Lama. He was enemies with [Trimön](#) and didn't get along well using power. He was famous when he was a [Trunyichemmo](#), but after being [Kalön](#) he was not that famous. And there was one called Nangchungnga [tib. gnang byung ba]. He didn't have any power. Then there was the one called Trenthongnga [tib. bkras mthong ba], but he was then in Kham serving as the Governor-General (tib. [doji](#) [mdo spyi]). So at that time, everything was up to [Trimön](#) and he could do whatever he wanted to do (tib. ganche re [gang byas red]. [Trimön](#) was an old man and he was saying that those people who were holding meetings down there were not good.

Q

Didn't all the government officials (shungshab) think that what [Lungshar](#) did was right?

A

The problem was that if the leader was not [Lungshar](#) and it was a nice person without faults (tib. gyönmepa [skyon med pa]) like [Lukhangwa](#), all of the government officials will go to the new government because we regarded [Lukhangwa](#) as a nice person. But [Lungshar](#) was the leader and when he had power he was not at all fair. He helped very much the people he liked and made his enemies suffer a lot and he was very powerful and was doing many things unrestrained by laws and customs (tib. trime lugmey [khrims med lugs med]). Though he made the government to get good income, he was not fair at all. For example, when Lhalu was his enemy, he imposed 1,000 [khe](#) of tax per year for a small estate of Lhalu's called Phempo Jangyab [tib. 'phan po lchang rgyab]. So Lady (tib. [lhajam](#) [lha lcam] Lhalu thought, "if he is imposing 1,000 [khe](#) for my small Jangyab estate, then he will impose tens of thousands of [khe](#) of taxes for my other big estates and I would not be able to keep up with it (tib. khung khyögi mare [khungs 'khyol gyi ma red]." So then she joined hands with [Lungshar](#) and she [using English] had sexual relations with him and became his woman [tib. skye dman]. And then [Lungshar](#) told Lady Lhalu, "You should apply for my son to be a lay official (tib. shabdö [zhabd sdod] from the Lhalu family and I will be the father." [say he was the father] At this time, [Lungshar] slept with his wife one



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night and slept in Lhalu's house one night. Like this he went back for forth so [Lungshar](#) got all the power of Lhalu. So it became like he imposed 1,000 [khe](#) of tax on oneself and felt regret and then he just imposed about 50 [khe](#) and 25 [khe](#) of grain on many other of Lhalu's estates. Everyone knew that he was doing that. He had become very powerful.

At that time, they [Lungshar's party] hoped that if they reported like this, he [the regent] will tell us to hold a Tsondu and we can make many decisions in the Tsondu and then they can have all the power and say that they made this and that new things and also use the soldier's power.

Q

What do you mean by soldier's power?

A

They thought if they gave orders to the soldiers saying it was an order from the Tsondu, they could give this order because in the past, [Lungshar](#) held a Tsondu and made a document that got rid of [Künphel](#) la. So this time, there will be an order to hold the Tsondu soon. If this [order] came, then we can arrest [Trimön](#) and those people and do things wantonly (tib. gangchung mangchung [gang byung mang byung] and that will be okay.

All the people were thinking that if they didn't hold a Tsondu, the Kashag wouldn't be able to manage the responsibilities, (tib. gen sögi mare ['gan bzod kyi ma red]), so people were wondering when they would hold the Tsondu. All the people were really scared. At that time, the Kashag went to the Regent and said that they want to hold a Tsondu. They [Lungshar's people] had told the Kashag "Please allow us to hold a Tsondu because we must do reforms in Tibet and we need to discuss this by holding a Tsondu."

Q

On that day, did they meet the [Kalön](#)?

A

According to the custom they were not allowed to meet the [Kalön](#) on that day. The officials under the fourth rank were not allowed to go inside the Kashag's meeting room and on that day they were all ordinary (tib. gyüma [dkyus ma] officials so they gave the petition to the Kadrung (Kashag's ADC/aide) [Bönshö](#) [tib. bon shod] and he accepted it. He then acted very cleverly and went through the motions of saying, "It doesn't matter. I

will report this to the Sawangs right away so today you should go back. I will push them (tib. shabkü [zhabs skul])." I heard that some monk officials were verbally smart ass, but [Bönshö](#) didn't show his anger and said, "I will do it fast. I am sorry, [tib. ngas mgyogs po byed kyi yin/ dgongs pa ma tshoms][using English] don't worry.

And then he came in (to the Kashag's office) and said that 12 people came to submit a petition. Then the Sawangs looked at each other and asked who the 12 people were? Then they didn't say anything and didn't hold any discussion about it. On the next day, they went to Reting Labrang and the Silön also came there and they discussed this. I heard that first the regent didn't know much because he was new and didn't have many ideas. They asked what would be better. They are telling us to allow them to hold the Tsondu. The Regent said, "What is the matter? Do you have to hold the Tsondu? The Regent didn't know much about the matter and the Silön also didn't know much about the main points (tib. nenga [gnad 'gag]) and what was going to happen.

People like [Trimön](#) were very malicious [tib. ngenbo [ngan po]) and said, "Probably there is no reason to hold the Tsondu. In the past, the so called Tsondu was very chaotic (tib. sa ngi si ngi [zang ngi zing ngi] and did reckless things (tib. gangchung mangchung [ [gang](#) byung mang byung]) and their main point is to demolish (tib. mepaso [med pa bzo]) the power of the Regent and you have been the Regent for just 2-3 months and you have done very well." [Trimön](#) also went through the motions of saying, "Though it doesn't make any difference for us because we are old and going to [using English] retire soon and can live only for several years and it is time to resign and practice dharma, but it is strange and very bad for you Regent because you are new." So the regent got agitated and said, "If [Lungshar](#) is doing this, that is too much, and this kind of work is bad. Shouldn't we do something right away? [tib. 'di [gang](#) min tshad red/ lung shar gyis de 'dra byed kyi yod na/ las ka 'di sdug cag red/ da lta lam seng cig byed dgos kyi ma red pas]. They said, "It is not good to do something about it right away."

Who said that?

The Kalöns said that. They also said, "Please leave him for 1-2 days in a gentle manner (tib. jampo ['jam po]). It will be better if we find a time and discuss this." At this time the Kashag knew right away all about what they [Lungshar's party] were doing because in the Lungshar's party there was [the lay official named] Kabshöpa [tib. ka shod pa] who was very close to [Trimön](#) and he was standing on two feet [on both sides]. He was two-faced. He was planning to stand on Lungshar's side if [Trimön](#) is no more and stand on Trimön's side if [Lungshar](#) is no more. He was keeping two [using English] seats and

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probably he was [using English] reporting all Lungshar's matters to [Trimön](#) like saying today they are doing this and so and so new people came, etc. And also he probably was telling [Lungshar](#) what [Trimön](#) was doing. Because Kabshöpa was smart, maybe he might have been telling [Lungshar](#), "Probably it will be good if I go to weigh how heavy [Trimön](#) is (tib. jikho kya [ljid khog bkyag])." So [Lungshar](#) being knowledgeable, might have told Kabshöpa, "You pretend to be friendly to him and just go and do it, but don't talk much. However, if you tell [Trimön](#) a little bit, he might also tell you something."

Q

Kabshöpa was standing on both sides, right?

A

Yes. He was thinking one of them would lose and one of them will win, and whoever loses, there would no problem for him because he was okay with both of them. And at that time, Kabshöpa's plan worked and he was lucky. So all the secret talk of [Lungshar's party] reached there and one day when they [Lungshar's party] said, "We should arrest [Trimön](#) and they were planning to arrest [Trimön](#), so [Trimön](#) got a little bit scared.

Q

Was this 2-3 days after they submitted the petition?

A

Yes. Everyone was waiting for the Tsondu and thinking that when the Tsondu was held, if several people talk a lot wantonly, the majority will not talk. [Lungshar](#) will not come out right away and will pretend to be asleep and when they did something wantonly and got the power, then all of them were going to vote for [using English] "L L L" [Lungshar]. This was their plan, but the Kashag didn't hold the Tsondu for 1-2 days. Probably, they submitted the petition on the 15th of the 3rd lunar month and on the 22nd of the 3rd lunar month, the Kashag met in [Tse](#) (the Potala) on a Thursday which was called the "Thursday Plenary Session" (tib. phubu gyendzom [phur bu gyas 'dzoms]) at which time Reting, the Silön and the Kashag jointly held a meeting once a week. Usually, they would settle the small matters by sending letters up and down and they would leave the important ones for Thursday. On that day if Reting was in Lhasa, he would go to the Potala.

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Q

They did not meet in one room, right?

A

The Kashag had a separate room and it was like the Kashag is [using English] Denny Hall and the Silön was in Thompson Hall [buildings on the University of Washington's campus]. On that day, the Kashag would have to go there [to the Silön or Regent]. They had many kinds of [using English] issues like the matters regarding the Sikkim Political Officer [tib. 'bras spyi blon chen] and the Chinese, etc. They would ask what would be better to settle these?

However, on that day, the Regent and the Kashag were holding a secret discussion about arresting [Lungshar](#). The good thing they did was that they did not let the secret leak out. Only several people: Reting, the Silön, and the four [Kalön](#) knew about the arrest. Even [Bönshö](#) knew about that only afterwards. Probably, they had a discussion in Lhasa on the 17th or 18th and they took some kind of oath [tib. na [mna')] holding some kind of statues on their heads not to talk about that. On Thursdays we will [using English] and open the door (tib. goche [sgo phye] [open this work] and they left it until then.

At that time, Lungshar's people were holding their meeting during the daytime in a big house that belonged to a monk official that was located in the big orchard of Tengyeling. They told some people to go to the Kashag and tell them to hurry up to do that [settle their petition]. They were doing this in an arrogant manner (tib. trog trog che [krog krog byas]).

When they went to the Kashag and asked what happened regarding the petition, the Kadrung, being a person who was skilled in communication (tib. kha khepo [kha mkhas po]), went through the motions of saying, "Today they are a little bit busy and one day they will discuss it." The Shapes also pretended not to be angry. On the Wednesday evening, [Trimön](#) rode a horse and took a servant and fled to Drepung. This was a [using English] plan that they had discussed before that, saying that [Sendregasum](#) is the most powerful entity in Tibet and among [Sendregasum](#), Drepung had 7,700 monks, [was the largest] so if [Trimön](#) acted like he was surrendering [for protection] to them, this could stop the Drepung monks from following [Lungshar](#). [Trimön](#) went to [Loseling](#) which had the highest number of monks -- about 4,000 -- and said, "Lungshar is making me suffer a lot, so if I stay in Lhasa it is dangerous for me. Since I belong [in the sense of being a patron] to [Loseling](#) (tib. thabkhung [thob khungs], please do that for me [protect me]." We [Surkhang] also

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belonged to [Loseling](#). Therefore, being a powerful [Shape](#) everyone kind of [using English] welcomed him and let him to stay in a good house. There was no danger, because if he stayed in Drepung, nobody will come there [to harm him].

Usually, the Drepung monks liked these things very much. For example, if I say that I am going to surrender to them, they will say right away, "We will die [for you], because you are ours [tib. nga [tsho](#) shi gi yin/ 'di nga tsho'i red.]." So [Trimön](#) stayed there on that day. That night, people didn't know about that and on the next day, the [Kalön](#) Lama Chötharla and Nangchungnga held the Kashag in [Tse](#). I heard that in the morning they went to the Regent and the Silön and they discussed this once again. Probably they said, "Today is the day, so please call [Lungshar](#)." On that day [Lungshar](#) was in the Dalai Lama's palace called Phodrang Sarpa [tib. pho brang gsar pa] which had been built by [Künphel](#) la where he was working on the things that were confiscated from [Künphel](#) La. He was the head person (tib. pompo [dpon po]) in charge of doing this. [Lungshar](#) was staying there relaxed and at ease. I heard that one government messenger came there wearing a yellow cap and said, "They said that Kungö [Lungshar](#) should come to the Shögaà now [the Regent's Secretariat]." So [Lungshar](#) took two servants and went there.

Q

Did the Kashag send the messenger?

A

No, he was send from the Shögaà [the Regent's Secretariat] where Reting and the Silön were. So [Lungshar](#) came there. The Regent and the Kashag were worried, and the Regent was looking from the window of [Tse](#) to see whether [Lungshar](#) was coming or not. I heard that after a while [Lungshar](#) came riding his horse. First he went to his house located below the Potala and stayed there a little bit. So they were wondering why would he stay there for a while. Then he rode his horse and went behind the Potala, so they thought maybe he is going to Lhalu or to Sera. If they didn't treat him in a gentle manner, his [using English] party was very famous, so they were little bit scared. Some of their trustworthy people were watching from behind the Potala to see where he was going.